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THE DEPUTY COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN,
BOX 1433J, G.P.O., ADELAIDE.
TELEPHONE: 83 69



COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

In reply quote No.

EIGHTH FLOOR,
DA COSTA BUILDING,
68 GRENFELL STREET,
ADELAIDE.

CEREAL HARVEST FORECAST

1959/60.

South Australia

Bulletin No. 2 of 1960.

Reports on the 1959/60 harvest have been received from 3,900 farmers representing 52% of the total area under crop. The estimated acreages and yields set out in this bulletin are based on these reports.

AREAS AND YIELDS.

Because of the adverse season (see "Seasonal conditions" below), the acreage sown to cereals during 1959 was considerably lower than the area farmers had intended to sow when previous statistics were collected last March. The wheat growing season (April to November) 1959 was the driest on record - the average rainfall over agricultural areas during April to November 1959 has been estimated at 6.22 inches compared with 6.83 inches in 1914 the previous driest season on record.

However the following table shows that average yields are considerably higher than in 1914/15 when wheat, barley and oats yielded 1.41, 6.75 and 2.62 bushels per acre respectively.

It should be noted that areas sown for grain, which failed or were fed off after near-failure, are included with area for grain.

Estimated Cereal Harvest, 1959/60

| Crop | Total Area | Area for Grain | Yield | Yield per Acre |
|------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | Acres | Acres | Bushels | Bushels |
| Wheat | 1,571,000 | 1,513,000 | 11,700,000 | 7.73 |
| Barley | 1,275,000 | 1,233,000 | 11,750,000 | 9.53 |
| Oats | 713,000 | 443,000 | 2,500,000 | 5.64 |
| Field Peas | 30,000 | 19,000 | 75,000 | 3.95 |
| | | | Tons | Tons |
| Cereal Hay | 127,000 | - | 114,500 | 0.90 |

Last autumn farmers advised that they intended to sow a total of 1,830,621 acres of wheat, 1,399,664 acres of barley and 979,375 acres of oats. According to advice received from the Director of Agriculture the slight swing from wheat to barley occurred because of the lateness of the season.

SEASONAL CONDITIONS

The average rainfall over agricultural areas for the first 3 months of the season, April to June, totalled only 1.08 inches. From July to October, the fall was somewhat greater, slightly over 1 inch being recorded each month. However preliminary figures for the season April to November total only 6.22 inches, less than half the average of 12.82 inches for the past 53 years, and 0.61 inches below the previous record dry season of 6.83 inches in 1914.

The Director of Agriculture has advised that with the absence of a good opening rain to the 1959 season, subsoils remained dry and crops generally depended upon infrequent and varied falls, resulting in a considerable acreage failing in some areas. Crops ripened early due to lack of moisture but yields generally were rather better than had been expected during the season.

HARVESTS IN DRY YEARS

Average yields of cereals in selected years in which the average rainfall during the heat-growing season was well below average show an improving trend generally. Better farming methods and less cropping in the drier areas of the State have been important factors in this improvement.

Cereal Yields in Selected Years

| Season | Average Rainfall Apr.-Nov. | Average Yield per Acre | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|------------|
| | | Wheat | Barley | Oats | Cereal Hay |
| | Inches | Bushels | Bushels | Bushels | Tons |
| 1914/15 | 6.83 | 4.41 | 6.75 | 2.62 | 0.46 |
| 1929/30 | 8.79 | 6.40 | 15.25 | 5.63 | 0.81 |
| 1940/41 | 8.19 | 6.97 | 10.14 | 3.87 | 0.96 |
| 1944/45 | 9.16 | 5.70 | 8.85 | 3.94 | 0.70 |
| 1957/58 | 8.67 | 11.20 | 14.48 | 8.01 | 0.92 |
| 1959/60 | 6.22(a) | 7.73(b) | 9.53(b) | 5.64(b) | 0.90(b) |

(a) Preliminary (b) Estimated.

REAL HARVESTS, 1955/56 to 1959/60

Details for individual crops in the following tables show the forecast for 1959/60 compared with the actual harvests for the previous four seasons.

After a long run of good seasons, many crop records were set in 1956/57. Yields during 1957/58 were very low but a number of new records were established in 1958/59. However the 1959/60 yields are generally the lowest for 15 years.

EAT

It is anticipated that the area of wheat for grain will be slightly higher than in 58/59 but will be only 60% of the area sown for grain in 1914 when 2,502,630 acres yielded 3,527,428 bushels. Although the 1959/60 yield is estimated to be much higher than is, it is nevertheless the smallest crop since 9,244,211 bushels were harvested from 623,145 acres in 1944/45.

Area and Production of Wheat

| | Unit | 1955/56 | 1956/57 | 1957/58 | 1958/59 | Estimated 1959/60 |
|----------------|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|
| Total Area | Acres | 1,678,298 | 1,480,676 | 1,411,406 | 1,459,859 | 1,571,000 |
| Area for Grain | Acres | 1,609,029 | 1,438,289 | 1,331,302 | 1,407,413 | 1,513,000 |
| Yield | Bushels | 28,891,524 | 31,431,547 | 14,913,988 | 32,032,232 | 11,700,000 |
| Yield per Acre | Bushels | 17.96 | 21.85 | 11.20 | 22.76 | 7.73 |

RLEY

The estimates for 1959/60 show that area for grain (1,275,000 acres) is expected to be the second highest on record the record being 1,367,059 acres for the previous season. However, the estimated yield of only 9.53 bushels per acre is the lowest average since 8.85 bushels per acre were recorded in 1944/45.

Area and Production of Barley

| | Unit | 1955/56 | 1956/57 | 1957/58 | 1958/59 | Estimated 1959/60 |
|----------------|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|
| Total Area | Acres | 1,067,661 | 1,248,648 | 1,271,434 | 1,367,059 | 1,275,000 |
| Area for Grain | Acres | 1,041,806 | 1,221,737 | 1,211,762 | 1,332,473 | 1,233,000 |
| Yield | Bushels | 24,597,979 | 34,002,876 | 17,551,669 | 37,664,492 | 11,750,000 |
| Yield per Acre | Bushels | 23.61 | 27.83 | 14.48 | 28.27 | 9.53 |

OATS

The estimated acreage of oats sown for grain during 1959 (443,000) was the second largest on record, the greatest being 481,076 acres in the previous year. The estimated yield of 2,500,000 bushels however, was the lowest since 1944/45 when 334,028 acres yielded 1,316,283 bushels for an average of 3.94 bushels per acre.

Area and Production of Oats

| | Unit | 1955/56 | 1956/57 | 1957/58 | 1958/59 | Estimated 1959/60 |
|----------------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------------------|
| Total Area | Acres | 841,936 | 843,481 | 874,908 | 845,052 | 713,000 |
| Area for Grain | Acres | 425,026 | 427,192 | 427,366 | 481,076 | 443,000 |
| Yield | Bushels | 7,280,340 | 8,318,296 | 3,422,525 | 11,992,155 | 2,500,000 |
| Yield per Acre | Bushels | 17.13 | 19.47 | 8.01 | 24.93 | 5.64 |

CEREAL HAY

The area and yield of cereal hay fell considerably in 1959/60. The estimated area (127,000 acres) and yield (114,500 tons) are respectively only 56% and 30% of the 1958/59 figures, and are in each case the lowest recorded for over 80 years.

Area and Production of Cereal Hay

| | Unit | 1955/56 | 1956/57 | 1957/58 | 1958/59 | Estimate 1959/60 |
|----------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| Area | Acres | 206,906 | 150,196 | 197,871 | 228,329 | 127,000 |
| Yield | Tons | 290,625 | 230,160 | 182,606 | 380,019 | 114,500 |
| Yield per Acre | Tons | 1.40 | 1.53 | 0.92 | 1.66 | 0.90 |

FIELD PEAS

It is estimated that the area planted for grain was 19,000 acres, which is approximately half the area of the record of 37,168 acres in 1957/58. The total yield is precast as 75,000 bushels, an average of 3.95 bushels per acre, compared with the record harvest of 632,795 bushels (20.75 bushels per acre) in 1956/57. Reports indicate that total area was 30,000 acres, of which more than 6,000 acres failed completely this season.

D.L.J. Aitchison

DEPUTY COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN

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